

In re Application of: Allor et al.
Application No.: 09/739,856

Remarks

In the application, claims 1 through 15 and 27 through 29 are pending. No claims currently stand allowed.

The Office Action dated July 15, 2004, has been carefully considered. The Office Action rejects claims 1 through 15, 27, and 29 under 35 U.S.C. § 102(e) as anticipated by U.S. Patent 6,144,962 ("Weinberg") and rejects claim 28 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as rendered obvious by Weinberg.

The present application and Weinberg both describe ways of presenting hierarchies of information. Because of this, their user interfaces have some superficial similarities. However, the present application is much more general than Weinberg. Weinberg is limited to presenting a hierarchy of hyperlinks in and among web sites. As such, Weinberg only contemplates one way of organizing the nodes in the hierarchy: the organization of the hyperlinks. Weinberg's nodes are always organized in a strict parent/child relationship:

A recursive layout method is then applied which uses the *parent-child node relationships*, as such relationships exist within the tree, to spatially position the nodes (represented as respective icons with the map) on the display screen such that *child nodes are positioned around and connected to their respective immediate parents*. (This layout method can also be used to display other types of hierarchical data structures, such as the tree structure of a conventional file system.) The result is a map which comprises *a hierarchical arrangement of parent-child node (icon) clusters in which parent-child relationships are immediately apparent*.

(Weinberg, column 2, lines 37 through 48, emphasis added.) It is true that in Weinberg the hierarchy can change over time, and that choices are sometimes made when there are several equally valid means of presenting the hyperlink hierarchy. Still, Weinberg always uses this parent-child relationship to organize the nodes into a hierarchy for the user.

In the present invention, on the other hand, different ways of organizing the nodes into hierarchies can be used. (See the present specification, page 3, lines 4 through 7, and page 4, lines 5 through 9.) These different organizational techniques can accommodate different goals based on the characteristics of the nodes and on the needs of the user. Claims 1 and 10, as amended herein, clearly present this aspect of the present invention. For example, multiple organizational techniques are presented in the following elements of claim 1.

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Claim 1: presenting *a first hierarchy* comprising a plurality of nodes, *the first hierarchy based, at least in part, on a first organization*, wherein at least one of the nodes represents resources for performing tasks;

 presenting *a second hierarchy* comprising a plurality of nodes, *the second hierarchy based, at least in part, on a second organization, the second organization distinct from the first organization, the second organization also distinct from a parent/child organization of nodes*.

(Emphasis added.) (Claim 10, as amended herein, contains similar language.) The use of an organizational structure other than the parent-child one is neither anticipated nor rendered obvious by Weinberg. Indeed, Weinberg's strict adherence to a parent-child organization can be said to teach away from the present invention's use of multiple organizational techniques.

The sections of Weinberg pointed out the by Office Action as anticipatory of the use of multiple organizational techniques (Weinberg, column 19, lines 56 through 64, and column 25, lines 58 through 65) do not in fact illustrate multiple organizational techniques. In these sections (and, in fact, throughout Weinberg) the parent-child organizational technique is used. The cited sections merely discuss how portions of a parent-child organizational structure may be displayed or collapsed from the user's view.


Thus, the invention as presently claimed in the independent claims 1 and 10 go beyond Weinberg's monolithic organizational structure. The remaining pending claims are dependent upon independent claims 1 or 10 and are thus allowable for at least the reasons given above. Applicants request that the rejections be withdrawn and that all currently pending claims be allowed.

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Conclusion

The application is considered in good and proper form for allowance, and the Examiner is respectfully requested to pass this application to issue. If, in the opinion of the Examiner, a telephone conference would expedite the prosecution of the subject application, the Examiner is invited to call the undersigned attorney.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, reading "John T. Bretscher", is written over a horizontal line.

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